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CABINET SECRETARIAT  
RASHTRAPATI BHAWAN

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GROUP OF OFFICERS CHAIRED BY SECRETARY  
(COORDINATION)**

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VENUE : Committee Room, Cabinet Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhawan.

DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2010

TIME OF MEETING: 4.45 P.M.

PRESENT

Shri Ajit Seth, Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat.  
Shri Bijoy Chatterjee, Secretary, D/o Chemicals and Petro-Chemicals.  
Shri D.K. Mittal, Additional Secretary, D/o Commerce.  
Shri S. Bhargava, Additional Secretary, M/o Petroleum and Natural Gas.  
Ms. Ajanta Dayalan, Joint Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat.  
Shri Sanjay Singh, Joint Secretary, D/o Consumer Affairs.  
Shri Satish Chandra, Joint Secretary, D/o Legal Affairs.  
Shri Naveen Prakesh, Joint Secretary, D/o Food & Public Distribution.  
Shri R.K. Tiwari, Joint Secretary, D/o Agriculture and Cooperation.  
Shri S.K. Dash, Joint Secretary, M/o Road Transport and Highways.  
Ms. Neelkamal, Joint Secretary, D/o Chemicals and Petrochemicals.  
Shri M.M. Chanda, Adviser, Planning Commission.  
Shri Dharmendra, Secretary (E&F), Govt. of NCT of Delhi.  
Dr. S.P. Gautam, Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board.  
Ms. Mala Dutt, Director, Cabinet Secretariat.  
Shri Manish Gupta, Director, M/o Textiles.  
Dr. Saroj, Director, M/o Environment And Forests.  
Ms. E.P. Nivedita, Director, M/o Urban Development.  
Shri V. Sivasubramanian, Director, D/o Economic Affairs.  
Shri Dharmender Prasad, Joint Development Commissioner, M/o MSME.  
Shri P.K. Dhar, Deputy Adviser, Planning Commission.

**Subject : Addressing issues of Plastic Waste.**

A meeting of the Group of Officers under the chairmanship of Secretary (Coordination) was held on 17.3.2010 at 4.45 p.m. in the Committee Room, Cabinet Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhawan to consider a note received from D/o Chemicals & Petrochemicals vide their O.M. No. 28016/6/2009-PC.II dated 25.1.2010, on the subject mentioned above.

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2. During the meeting, the main issues raised/discussed were as follows:
- i. D/o Chemicals & Petrochemicals (C&PC) indicated that the present issue primarily arises from the fact that restrictions have been placed on use of plastic carry bags although plastics in general have several advantages on account of their versatility, relatively low cost, ease of manufacture and ease of handling and transportation. D/o C&PC also stated that plastics are not harmful to the environment, and are 100% recyclable. Also, consumption of plastics in downstream processing sector has shown strong correlation with growth in GDP. In view of these factors, suitable solutions need to be found by devising ways of managing the use and disposal of plastic products, rather than by replacing them with other materials.
  - ii. D/o C&PC made a presentation in which it highlighted that, as compared to other materials such as aluminum, steel, glass and paper, energy requirement for manufacture of polyethylene is the least. Plastics also have other superior properties such as being safe and hygienic and being chemically inert, besides helping to enhance shelf life of contained material. As regards plastic carry bags, they consume 40% less energy during production, and also generate 80% less solid waste after use, than paper bags. While both plastics and paper can be recycled, it takes 91% less energy to recycle a kilogram of plastic than a kilogram of paper. D/o C&PC indicated that emphasis is being placed on promoting bio-degradable plastics because they are sustainable and reduce the requirement of landfill space. However, most bio-degradable plastics are technically unsuitable for uses such as packaging. Also, systems for collection and segregation would still be required, and more importantly, bio-degradable plastics can compost only in controlled conditions. Hence, recyclable plastics remain as the preferred option.
  - iii. D/o C&PC also stated that, according to studies, plastics constitute only about 5% of total municipal solid waste (MSW) in major metro cities in India. Hence, the main issue is disposal of thin plastic carry bags, single use plastic waste and multi-layered packets which are not collected by waste pickers. D/o C&PC emphasized that the solution to disposal of waste lies in segregation at source. To achieve this objective, awareness needs to be created among citizens, and proper systems for collection of segregated waste, as well as suitable systems for recycling, need to be put in place. It is in this context that D/o C&PC have submitted proposals relating to use of plastics and disposal of waste materials.
  - iv. One of the proposals submitted by D/o C&PC is to lift the ban on plastic carry bags and other restrictive measures imposed by the Delhi Government vide its order dated 7.1.2009. D/o C&PC indicated that one writ petition and 3 SLPs have been filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court against the ban. The next date of hearing is 23.4.2010. Depending upon the Supreme Court's order, issue of revoking the ban can be taken up subsequently. However, it needs to be examined whether Government should implead itself as a party, so as to put forth Government's view in the matter. M/o Law & Justice stated that in order to

- consider the matter, copies of writ petition and SLPs filed in the Supreme Court are required by them. It was decided that D/o C&PC and M/o E&F will make arrangements to provide requisite documents to M/o Law and Justice.
- v. Another proposal of D/o C&PC is that M/o Environment & Forests (E&F) should finalise at the earliest their Draft Notification on Plastics (Manufacture, Usage and Waste Management) Rules, 2009 to replace the existing Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage (Amendment) Rules, 2003, inter alia, prescribing a minimum thickness and certain minimum dimensions for plastic bags. However, D/o C&PC stated that a proposal contained therein to ban non-recyclable laminated plastic/metallic pouches which are used in packaging of processed food, needs to be reviewed as such packaging is cost effective and energy efficient. Hence, alternatives available for this purpose may first be comprehensively examined before prohibiting use of such material. DOC indicated that there should be no restrictions on manufacture of plastics as they would affect exports. Restrictions, if any, could be considered only on usage. M/o E&F indicated that currently they are in the process of consultation with stakeholders on the Draft Notification, which is likely to take about two months. The issues raised in the meeting will be taken into consideration along with other relevant factors and views by M/o E&F while finalizing the Draft Notification.
- vi. Central Pollution Control Board was of the view that even if minimum thickness of carry bags is enhanced, effective enforcement of segregation may still not be possible. Under the circumstances, suitable plants would need to be set up for segregation of waste at landfill sites. One successful example of such a plant is at Gwalior, which is self-sustaining as it does not require any funding from the Government. Further, in respect of cement kilns in States, co-processing guidelines have been issued last month.
- vii. M/o Textiles indicated that since waste has economic value, incentive may not be required for setting up recycling plants.
- viii. D/o C&PC stated that another proposal is that M/o E&F should stipulate mandatory adherence to BIS guidelines for recycling of plastics, and that they may also consider, in consultation with BIS, laying down mandatory colour coding and separate identification markers for bio-degradable and recyclable bags. Further, plastic bags made from recycled plastic material should be mandated for use in manufacture of items such as dustbins, garbage containers and bin-liners. Another proposal is to strictly implement the registration of plastic manufacturers and recyclers within three months and, thereafter, take strict action against unregistered plastic recycling units. This step would help ensure usage of sound methods and/or standards of recycling. D/o Consumer Affairs (CA) indicated that BIS specifications are already available for compostable plastics. As regards recycling, guidelines exist but they are not mandatory. However, they could be made mandatory and color coding as proposed by D/o C&PC could also be considered. It was also noted that registration of plastic manufacturers and recyclers is already provided for.

Hence, the issue relates to strict enforcement of existing provisions regarding registration.

- ix. M/o Women & Child Development while generally supporting the proposal for making BIS guidelines on recycling mandatory, indicated that printing the name of the manufacturers and number of times the plastic has been recycled on the bags, involves practical problems in implementation.
- x. D/o C&PC has also proposed that M/o UD may, under ongoing programmes like JNNURM or special schemes, facilitate proper collection, segregation and storage of plastic waste, and its efficient transportation and processing through involvement of institutions such as RWAs, NGOs and local municipal authorities as well as private entities. Awareness building programmes could also be taken up in a structured way. M/o Urban Development (UD) stated that under JNNURM, 41 projects have been sanctioned so far which include certain projects for segregation of waste. However, most funds are already committed and also, the States which decide the particular projects to be posed, mainly forward projects relating to water supply and not waste disposal. M/o UD stated that while approving the DPRs, 100% segregation is being insisted, but MSW is not a Central subject. D/o Commerce (DOC) indicated that segregation of waste at source is the primary requirement, which should be enforced by M/o UD through suitable incentives. M/o UD indicated that there are practical problems in segregation that need to be taken into consideration while taking a decision on the issue. On a suggestion that the subject of MSW should be transferred from M/o E&F to M/o UD, it was noted that the matter is under consideration in M/o E&F.
- xi. Another proposal of D/o C&PC is to set up a Plastic Waste Processing Fund by charging a cess amounting to 0.5% of manufactured price of polymers produced or imported into the country, to be utilized to promote setting up of plastic waste reprocessing units for which an administrative mechanism could be set up under D/o C&PC. D/o Economic Affairs (DEA) stated that they do not support the proposal for introduction of a new levy, as Government is slowly moving away from multiplicity of levies. In any case, funding is available under the VGF scheme and projects can also be taken up on the PPP mode. Further, in the Budget for 2010-11, exemption from basic customs duty has been provided for certain selected compostable polymers/bio-plastics.
- xii. Planning Commission (PC) indicated that while they generally agree with most of the proposals submitted by D/o C&PC, they do not concur with the proposal relating to introduction of a cess for funding reprocessing of waste. Planning Commission suggested that it should be the responsibility of the producers to provide for waste disposal. However, it was noted that this proposal is not feasible since consumption of plastics may be at a distant location from the point of manufacture. In this context, Planning Commission emphasised that since standards are already available for waste disposal, the implementation machinery needs to be improved and greater awareness amongst people is also required.

- xiii. D/o Food & PD emphasized that multi-layered plastics need not be banned as these form the major packaging material for edible oils, and were also used recently for foodgrains procurement to meet the shortfall in availability of jute bags.
- xiv. M/o Road Transport & Highways, M/o MSME, D/o Agriculture and M/o Petroleum & NG supported the proposals.
- xv. Delhi Government indicated that they concur with most of the proposals except that relating to lifting the ban on use of plastic carry bags. For segregation of waste at source, Delhi Government is trying to take suitable steps, but inspite of best efforts even in the limited area under NDMC, segregation is not taking place to the desired extent.
- xvi. Secretary (Coordination) observed that except the proposals relating to levy of a cess and revocation of the existing ban on plastic carry bags, there is general consensus on various proposals submitted by D/o C&PC aimed primarily at proper disposal of plastic waste. He further observed that as per the background note circulated by D/o C&PC, a Task Force set up in 1997 had recommended an action plan for the industry, which, inter alia, included action to be taken by the industry for (a) setting up of the Indian Centre for plastics in environment (b) implementation of guidelines for plastic packaging and waste disposal, (c) establishing an effective waste collection system through pilot projects and (d) establishing network of concerned industry associations for promoting waste management and organized recycling. He also referred to the Annexure 4 and page 11 of Annexure 5 to the background note circulated by the D/o C&PC and enquired whether any buy-back system has been introduced by PET bottle manufacturers Association and also enquired whether the plastic manufacturers had made any efforts on their part to promote efficient handling of waste generated by plastic bags. Secretary (Coordination) observed that D/o C&PC may examine action taken by the industry in pursuance of this action plan.

3. After detailed deliberations, the following decisions were taken:

- i. M/o E&F will expedite the consultation process on its draft Notification on Plastics (Manufacture, Usage and Waste Management) Rules, 2009, and while doing so will, inter-alia, take into consideration the suggestions made at the meeting along with other relevant factors and views. It will also take steps for enforcing the existing provisions regarding registration of manufacturers and recyclers.
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ii. M/o E&F will, in consultation with D/o CA and BIS, pursue the proposal for making the standards for recycling mandatory and consider inclusion of colour coding and separate identification markers for biodegradable and recyclable bags, if feasible.
- iii. M/o UD will examine ways for segregation of plastic waste including awareness campaigns, and for proper collection, transportation and recycling of waste through involvement of all stakeholders.

iv.

M/o E&F will, in consultation with M/o Law and Justice & D/o C&PC, examine the need and feasibility of impleading Central Government as a party in the appeals pending in the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the issue of ban on plastic carry bags.

v.

Based on orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, D/o C&PC will hold further discussions with concerned Ministries/Departments, State Governments and other stakeholders on the issue of ban on plastic bags.

vi.

D/o C&PC will examine action taken by the industry on the activities contained in the action plan for the Industry recommended by the National Plastics Waste Management Task Force set up in 1997.

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